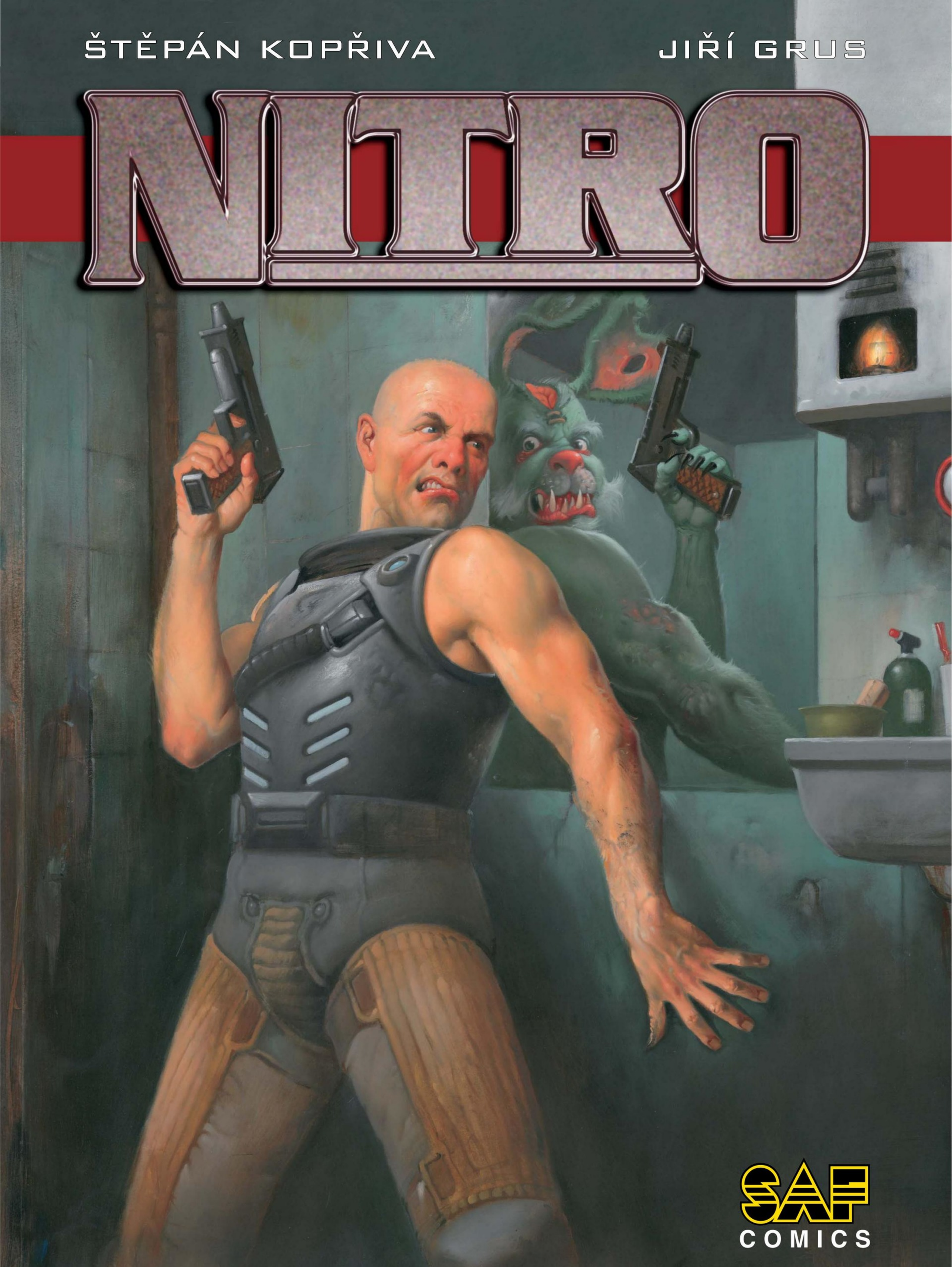
ŠTĚPÁN KOPŘIVA

JIŘÍ GRUS

NITRO



SAF COMICS

ŠTĚPÁN KOPŘIVA

JIŘÍ GRUS

NITRO

SAF COMICS

© Strip Art Features, 2022

www.safcomics.com

GO AHEAD, PUSSY.

WALTER DELGADO ALWAYS USED A SHOT-GUN.

THAT WAS HIS STYLE.

THE KOBE TAI COSMIC TRUCK SHUTTLED REGULARLY BETWEEN TAIWAN, EARTH AND MADISON B, MARS. WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6TH 17:54.

3 MINUTES, 27 SECONDS AFTER THE RAID BEGAN.

THE CAPTAIN IS HISTORY. HOW MANY MORE?

THREE.

MIDAS

CARGO SPACE

BLAM

JEEZ, WALT. WE USED TO FLY TOGETHER.

NOT ANY MORE, HANS.

KABOOM

SNIP

SNIP

FINITO.

HOW'S IT LOOK?

SHOW US THE STUFF, MILTON.

BULLSHIT. IT'S DIAMONDS. DEFINITELY DIAMONDS.

I HEARD MILTON WAS DELIVERING GOLD TO MARS.

WHAT THE HELL'S THAT?

THE BEST-SELLING TOY THIS SEASON. GUESS WHAT'S COMING IN TWO WEEKS?

WHAT?

CHRISTMAS.

IT'S MOSTLY ZUCLOPENTHIXOL, MIXED WITH VALPROATE SODIUM. THERE'S ALSO SOME PERPHENAZINE AND CARBAMAZEPINE. SOMETIMES THEY ADD HALOPERIDOL AND ONCE IN A WHILE THEY EVEN PUT IN SOME GOOD OLD LITHIUM.

AFTER MY RELEASE I FRIED THE REST OF MY BRAIN WITH METHANOL MIXED WITH NITROGEN IODIDE AND SODIUM BICARB.

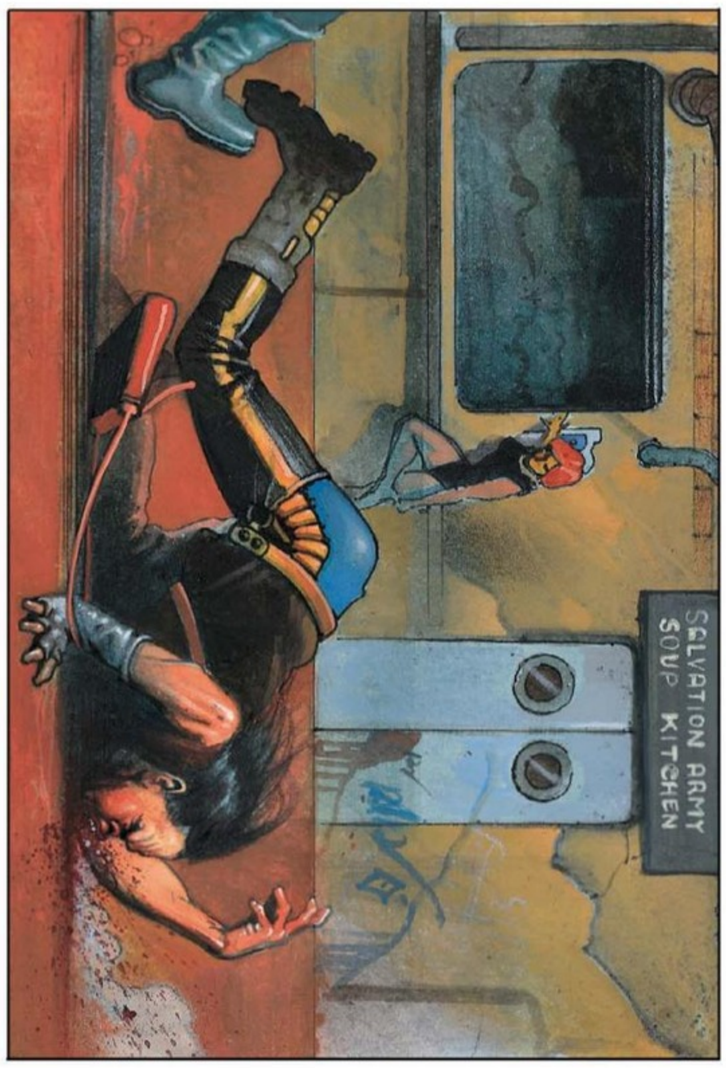
THAT'S WHAT THEY CALL A BUM'S MARTINI. NOT SHAKEN OR STIRRED - NOT UNLESS YOU WANT YOUR HANDS BLOWN OFF.

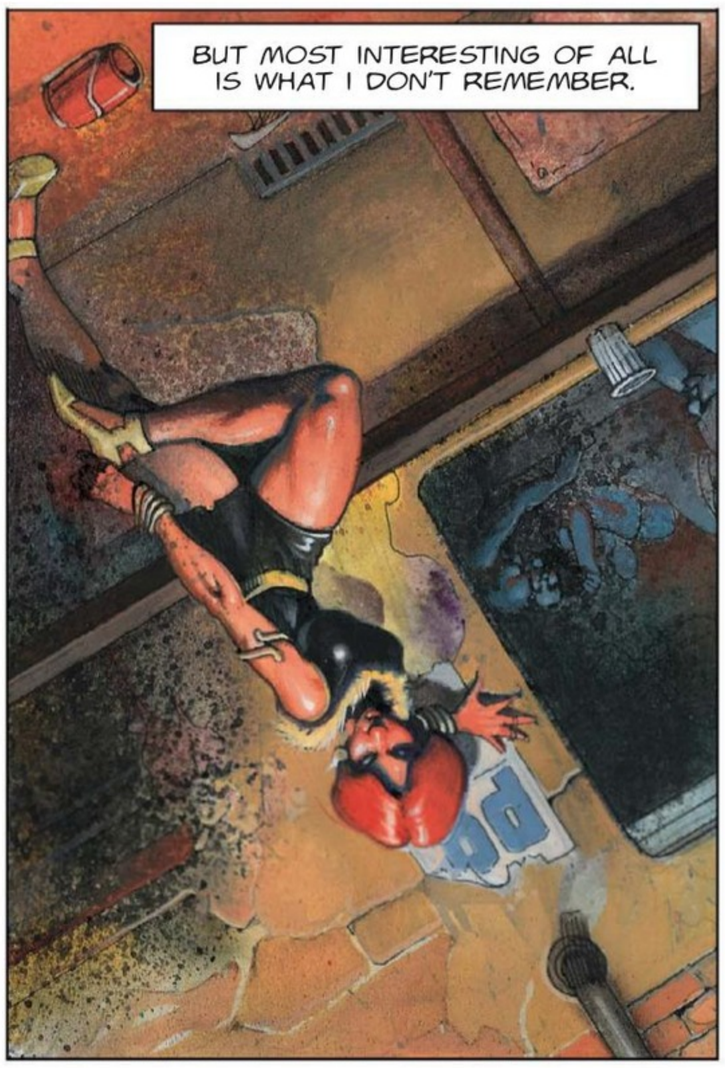
NOW I CAN LOOK ANYBODY STRAIGHT IN THE EYE AND TELL THEM I DON'T REMEMBER A THING.

I'M LYING, OF COURSE.

SOME THINGS'VE STAYED IN MY MIND. DETAILS MAINLY. I REMEMBER SIXTY-TWO TV DINNERS, ALL SPAGHETTI BOLOGNESE, THREE TIMES A DAY. I REMEMBER THE GREASY STENCH OF OTHER PEOPLE'S UNWASHED HAIR RISING FROM THEIR SPACESUIT HELMET.

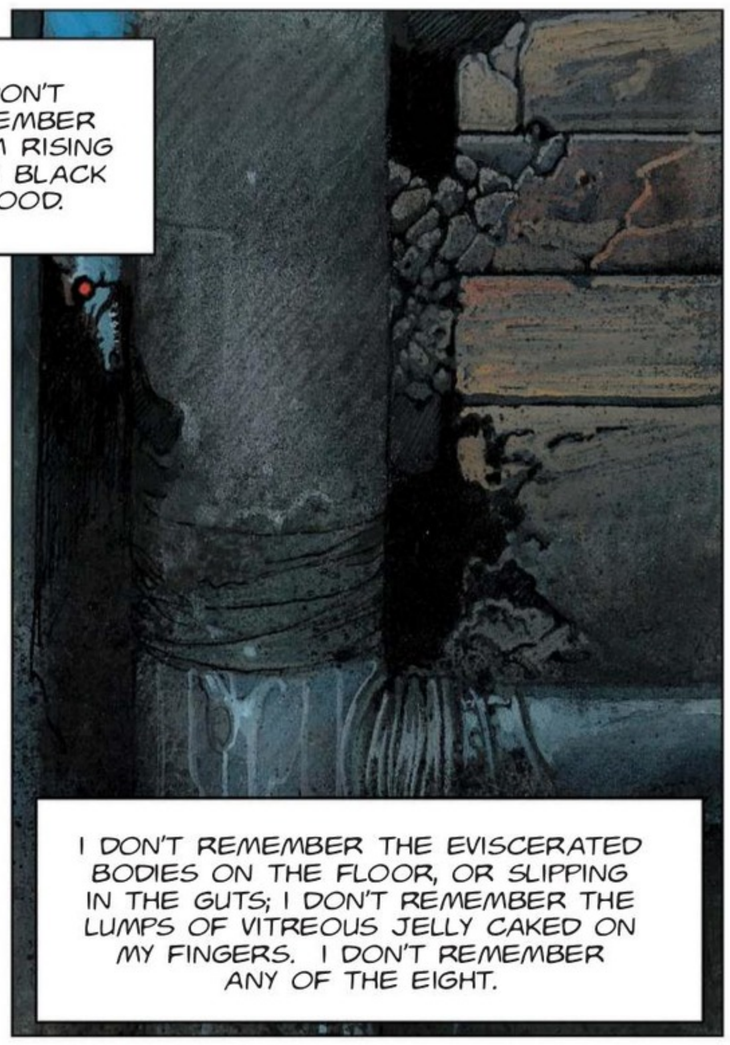
I REMEMBER DELGADO'S SUPPRESSED DRONE WHENEVER HE WAS SWEET-TALKING ANYONE WHO WANTED TO QUIT. AND THE CRINKLING SOUND OF CRUSHED BEER CANS JUST BEFORE THEY FLEW INTO THE GARBAGE BIN.

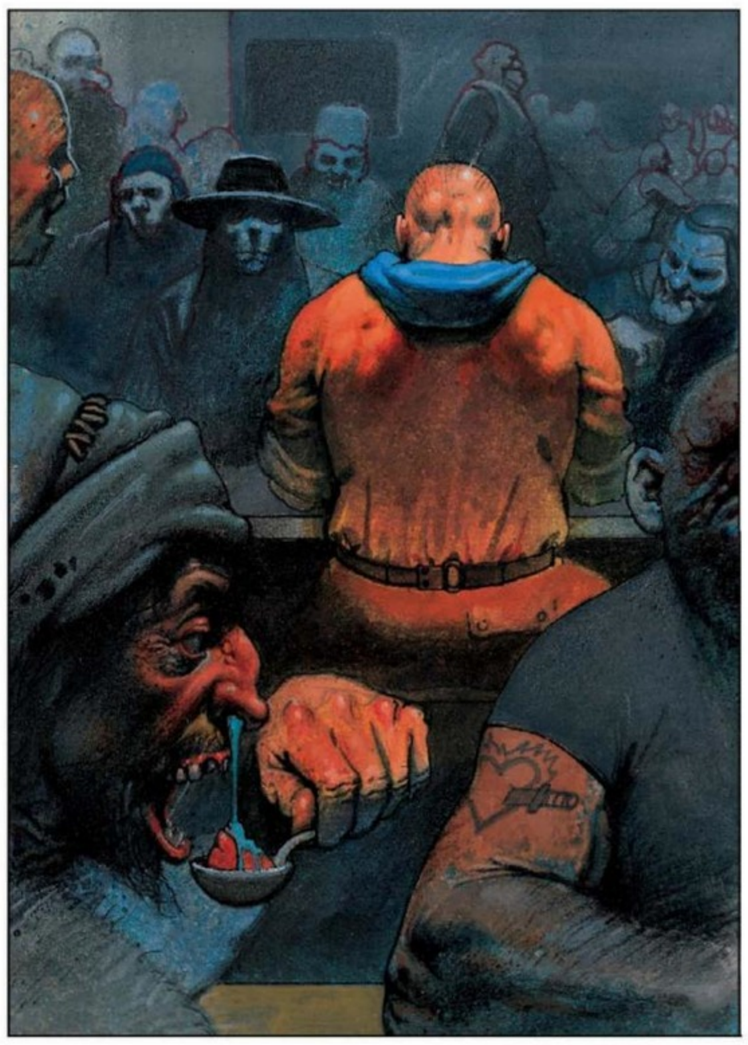

SALVATION ARMY
SOUP KITCHEN

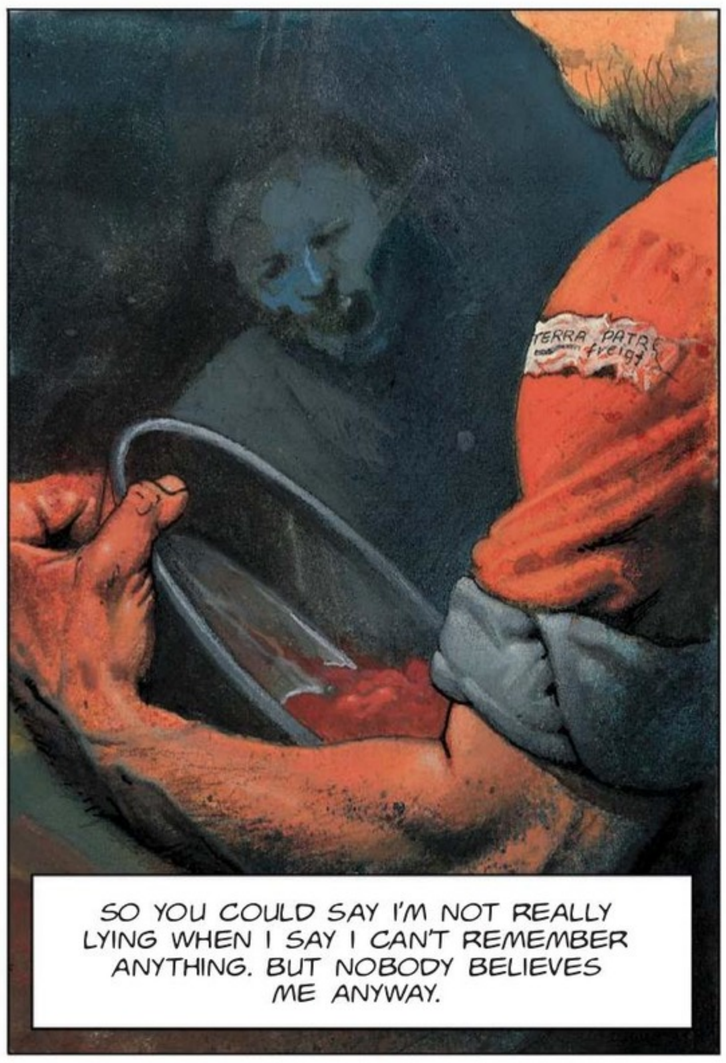

BUT MOST INTERESTING OF ALL IS WHAT I DON'T REMEMBER.

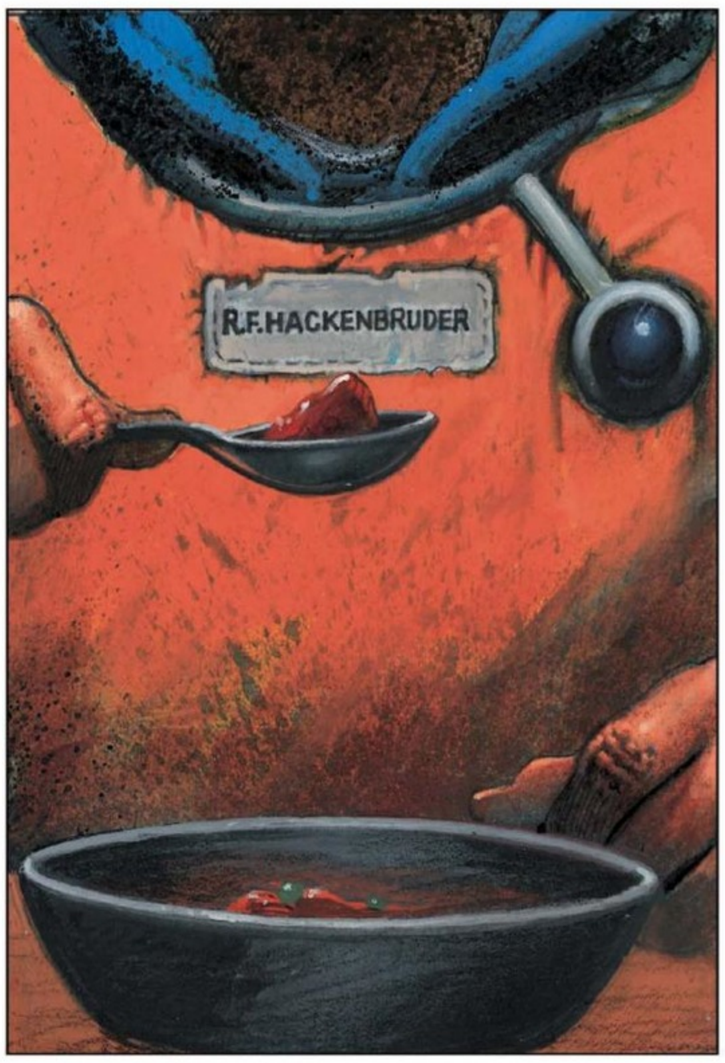
I DON'T REMEMBER "MIAMI VICE" EVEN THOUGH I KNOW THE TV WAS ON ALL THE TIME. FOR ALL I KNOW, SONNY CROCKETT DOESN'T EXIST.
I DON'T REMEMBER VENDING MACHINES THAT SOLD CANDY BARS. I DON'T REMEMBER BEING BEATEN UP, BUT I'M MISSING SIX TEETH.

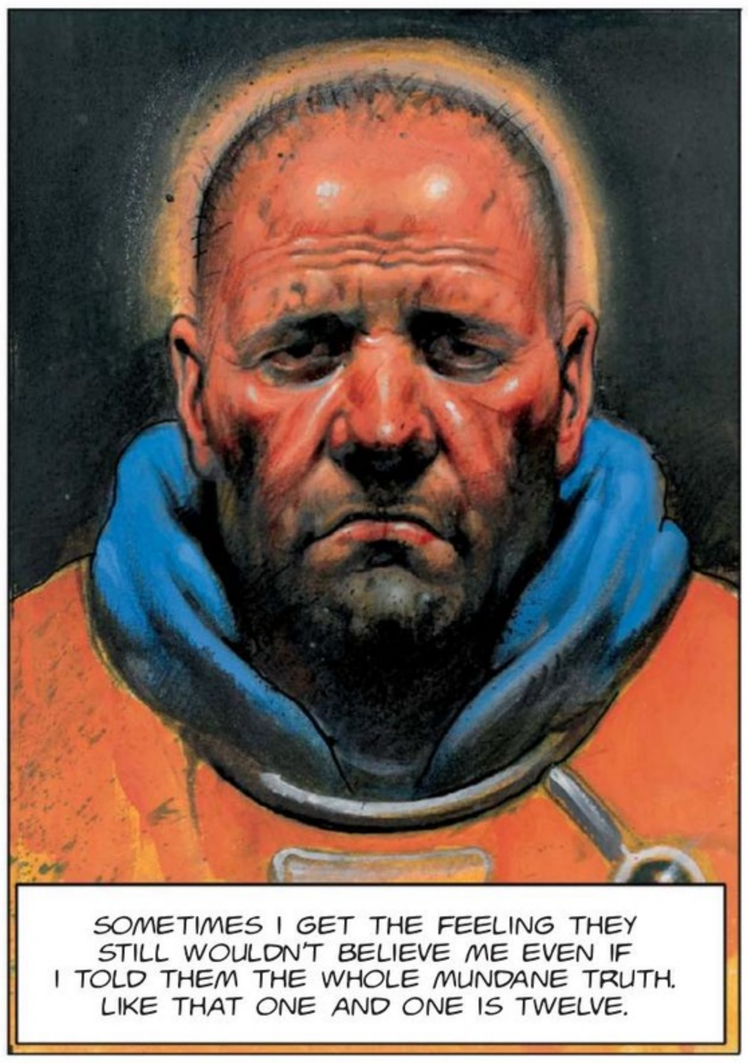
I DON'T REMEMBER STEAM RISING FROM BLACK BLOOD.
KOPRIVA
GRUS


I DON'T REMEMBER THE EVISCERATED BODIES ON THE FLOOR, OR SLIPPING IN THE GUTS; I DON'T REMEMBER THE LUMPS OF VITREOUS JELLY CAKED ON MY FINGERS. I DON'T REMEMBER ANY OF THE EIGHT.


I DON'T REMEMBER VENDING MACHINES THAT SOLD CANDY BARS. I DON'T REMEMBER BEING BEATEN UP, BUT I'M MISSING SIX TEETH.


SO YOU COULD SAY I'M NOT REALLY LYING WHEN I SAY I CAN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING. BUT NOBODY BELIEVES ME ANYWAY.


R.F.HACKENBRUDER


SOMETIMES I GET THE FEELING THEY STILL WOULDN'T BELIEVE ME EVEN IF I TOLD THEM THE WHOLE MUNDANE TRUTH. LIKE THAT ONE AND ONE IS TWELVE.

HI, ROD.

JINGLE BELLS, JINGLE...

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

HI THERE, FLEX.

SOCIAL SECURITY SERVICE

STERLING GUARANTEES ANYTHING

WANTED 10 0000

RICHARD HACKENBRUDER, ALIAS FLEX, FORTY-ONE YEARS OLD. TWENTY-ONE YEARS EXPERIENCE IN INTERPLANETARY FREIGHT, THE LAST SEVEN YEARS WORKING FOR MIDAS.

UNEMPLOYED FOR TWO YEARS NOW. EIGHTEEN MONTHS AT THE MPI. WHAT DOES 'FLEX' MEAN?

NOTHING. JUST A NICKNAME.

BESIDES FLYING A TRUCK FOR MIDAS, THEY HAD YOU CLASSIFIED C12 FOR THE LAST SIX MONTHS. WHAT'S THAT?

MR. HACKENBRUDER, YOU'VE APPLIED TO HAVE YOUR UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE EXTENDED BY TWO MONTHS. I'M SORRY TO HAVE TO TURN YOU DOWN, MR. HACKENBRUDER.

COME ON, WE BOTH KNOW YOU CAN'T GET BY ON ONLY 150 A MONTH. DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE SO BROKE YOU HAVE TO GO TO THE SALVATION ARMY TO EAT.

WELL, ACTUALLY...

STRIKE-BREAKER.

WHAT?

I WAS A TOTAL MESS. BUT SOMEHOW I STILL WASN'T GETTING IT.

ON A ONE-TO-TEN SCALE OF BEING THE SHITS, THAT DAY RATED 38.

HE SAID THAT JUST BEFORE HE SPOTTED HER. WHEN HE TURNED AROUND HE REALIZED THAT THINGS WERE JUST THE OPPOSITE.

EVERYTHING INDICATES THAT YOU'RE MR. HACKENBRUDER. AND EVERYTHING ALSO INDICATES THAT YOU'RE PRETTY SCREWED RIGHT NOW.

NO, I'M A MILLIONAIRE IN DISGUISE GETTING TO KNOW THE BOTTOM RUNG OF THE SOCIAL LADDER.

IRONY, I LIKE THAT. I LIKE A MAN WITH A SENSE OF HUMOR.

OF COURSE THAT DOESN'T MEAN I'D DISCRIMINATE AGAINST A MAN WITH NO SENSE OF HUMOR.

AM I UNDER ARREST?

GOD, NO. DO I LOOK LIKE A COP?

SORRY.

SO SHALL WE GO?

WHERE?

AND WHAT FOR?

HMMMM. MONEY MAYBE?

MIDAS

TAXI 000 667 223

TING

120

SIXTEEN MINUTES. DECENT TIME, TAMARA.

THIS IS MR. HACKENBRUDER. HACKENBRUDER, I GUESS I DON'T HAVE TO TELL YOU WHO MR. DA SILVA IS.

IF THERE WAS ONE THING I DIDN'T EXPECT THAT MORNING IT WAS TO BE STANDING FACE TO FACE WITH THE BILL GATES OF THE INTERPLANETARY TRANSPORT.

WELCOME, MR. HACKENBRUDER. I MIGHT HAVE A BUSINESS PROPOSITION FOR YOU.

FOR ME?

DO YOU KNOW WALT DELGADO?

FORMER TRUCKER. WE FLEW TO-GETHER.

TZZT

ALSO THE ORGANIZER OF THE GENERAL TRUCKER'S STRIKE TWO YEARS AGO. THE SAME STRIKE DURING WHICH YOU WORKED FOR US AS AN AGENT.

I DON'T REMEMBER THAT AT ALL.

NO? MIDAS ASKED YOU FOR DISCREET INSIDE WORK, BUT IN THE END WE WERE SCRAPING UP DEAD BODIES AND SHELLING OUT HUSH MONEY.

TWO DAYS AGO DELGADO AND OTHER FORMER TRUCKERS ATTACKED THE KOBE TAI FREIGHTER SHIP, WHICH WAS CARRYING A LARGE CONSIGNMENT OF FILD MULTISMACK JUNKERS.

DELGADO IS OFFERING TO SELL THE SHIPMENT BACK TO US. FOR 250 MILLION. IF WE DON'T PAY UP HE'S GOING TO TNT THE JUNKERS SKY HIGH.

TZZT

OF COURSE WE'RE GOING TO PAY. IT'S ALMOST CHRISTMAS AND THE FILD MULTISMACK JUNKERS ARE A HUGE HIT. BUT DELGADO WANTS YOU TO CARRY THE RANSOM MONEY.

OH, DARLING, YOU KNOW WHY, DON'T YOU? YOU DOUBLE-CROSSED HIM AT A KEY MOMENT. HE LOST THE STRIKE BECAUSE OF YOU. HE WANTS TO FINISH WHAT WAS STARTED.

WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO SAY IS THAT YOU'LL PAY ME TO MEET DELGADO SO HE CAN SMASH MY FACE IN?

I'LL DO IT.

PRECISELY.

SEND IN LEROY AND CAPTAIN VICKERS.

LEROY. I DIDN'T KNOW HE'D CLAWED HIS WAY SO HIGH UP THE COMPANY MT. EVEREST.

OF COURSE.

MILTON, I GOTTA CATEGORICALLY PROTEST. TAMARA'S PLAN'S TOTALLY NUTS FROM START TO FINISH.

CAPTAIN VICKERS... THIS IS EMBARRASSING, BUT WOULD YOU MIND...?

GOD, DO WE REALLY WANNA GIVE THIS BUM A QUARTER MILLION? 'CAUSE IF WE DO, JUST GIMME TEN MINUTES TO SCROUNGE UP SOMEBODY A BIT MORE DEPENDABLE OFF THE STREET.

TAMARA, I HOPE THAT YOU DIDN'T FORGET TO TELL MILTON THAT OUR FRIEND FLEX HERE SPENT A YEAR AND A HALF IN THE MENTAL PURIFICATION INSTITUTE.

I'M ALRIGHT NOW.

HACKENBRUDER GOT SOMETHING AT THE MPI THEY CALL "CHARACTER FLEXIBILITY". HE HAS FITS HE CAN'T CONTROL 'CAUSE HE SUFFERS FROM POSEY'S SYNDROME.

TZZT

THE FIVE THOUSAND WAS DRYING UP LIKE A MIRAGE WITH DEAD BATTERIES.

"CHARACTER FLEXIBILITY" MEANS HE AIN'T GOT ANY DEFENSES. NO MORAL DEFENSES, NO MENTAL DEFENSES, NOTHING.

FLEXIBILITY MEANS HE'S GOT NO INHIBITIONS. HE'S THE MOST TWISTED GOON I'VE EVER MET. A ROLLS ROYCE AMONG MOTHERFUCKERS.

SIR, THIS GUY'S ABOUT AS STABLE AS A BOTTLE OF NITRO AND...

SHUT YOUR TRAP, LEROY.

IT TURNS ME ON WHEN YOU TALK LIKE THAT.

IF YOU'RE SO WORRIED ABOUT THE OPERATION, FLY WITH CAPTAIN VICKERS.

HACKENBRUDER WILL BRING ALONG TWO MORE GRUNTS TO HELP HIM TOTE THE MONEY. AND ONE OF STERLING'S MEN WILL BE THERE TO GUARANTEE THAT THE TRANSFER GOES SMOOTHLY.

BOTH YOUR CAREERS ARE STAKED ON THE SUCCESS OF THIS OPERATION.

TAP TAP

THAT, OF COURSE, DOESN'T INCLUDE YOU, HACKENBRUDER.

IF YOU DON'T PULL IT OFF AND THE INSURANCE COMPANY DOESN'T COUGH UP FOR THE HIJACKING, YOU'LL BE LUCKY TO ROT IN THE MPI FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE. BUT I DON'T THINK YOU'LL BE THAT LUCKY.

WANT A RIDE, MR. HACKENBRUDER?

A FERRARI DAYTONA SPIDER 365 GT. THE CAR DON JOHNSON DROVE IN "MIAMI VICE". I PROMISE I'LL DRIVE SLOWLY.

PEOPLE DON'T OFFER ME RIDES MUCH. I GUESS I MUST'VE DAZZLED YOU WITH MY IMPISH GIGOLO CHARM.

I'M JUST CURIOUS ABOUT YOU. YOU'RE WELL KNOWN AMONG TRUCKERS.

FUCK RUGRATS MB21

RRRG

EVERYBODY GETS ALL FUNNY ANYTIME YOUR NAME IS MENTIONED, FLEX. WHAT DOES FLEX MEAN ANYWAY?

NOTHING. JUST A NICKNAME.

ANYWAY: WHY DON'T YOU FLY ANYMORE?

GOD KNOWS WHY, BUT FOR HALF A SEC THERE I THOUGHT I MIGHT TELL HER THE TRUTH. A FUNNY FEELING. LUCKILY, IT DISAPPEARED QUICKLY.

I HAVE ENOUGH MONEY.

I'D ASK YOU IN, MS. VICKERS, BUT THEY LAID NEW LINOLEUM YESTERDAY AND IT HASN'T DRIED YET.

MY NAME IS NIKKI. AND I WOULDN'T COME IN ANYWAY. YOU CAN'T HOOK ME THAT EASILY.

I'D KNOWN GIRLS LIKE NIKKI VICKERS. THEY'RE REALLY EAGER TO LOOK PROFESSIONAL, TO SHOW THEY'VE MADE IT AS TRUCKERS.

ANYWAY, I WASN'T THINKING ABOUT VICKERS. I WAS THINKING ABOUT DA SILVA'S OFFER. EVEN THOUGH THERE WASN'T TOO MUCH TO THINK ABOUT.

I KNEW THE MONEY WAS MY LAST CHANCE FOR A NORMAL LIFE.

AND I KNEW I'D DO ANYTHING TO GET IT.

TWO HOURS, TWO STUPID HOURS. THAT'S A CONCRETE COMPROMISE, RIGHT? NO? NO? OKAY, YOU GUYS DRIVE A HARD BARGAIN. JUST A HALF AN HOUR, OKAY? I'LL HAVE THE MONEY IN A HALF HOUR...

AAAAAAAA! FUCK!

CUT OFF ANOTHER FINGER, CHARLIE, SO WE DON'T HAVE TO COME BACK NEXT WEEK. HE AIN'T GONNA GET THE MONEY BY THEN.

HOLD ON.

JUST LET IT GO FOR NOW. KAWALSKI WILL PAY THE DEBT NEXT WEEK.

I HOPE YOU'RE NOT EXPECTING US TO BUY THAT. NOT FROM YOU, FLEX.

THIS CONTRACT IS FROM MIDAS, AND IT GUARANTEES KAWALSKI TWO THOUSAND BY NEXT WEEK.

SEVEN DAYS, KAWALSKI.

FUCK, FLEX, THAT WAS TOTALLY FANTASTIC, YOU RESCUED ME.

WHY DIDN'T YOU BORROW FROM THE MAFIA?

THEY TOOK A LOOK AT MY PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILE AND NOTICED I GOT MAGGOTT'S SYNDROME. THE BASTARDS SAID I WAS A RISKY INVESTMENT. AND STERLING'S INTEREST RATES ARE LOWER.

NO WONDER. FROM THE MINUTE THE GREY ECONOMY WAS LEGALIZED, STERLING'S BEEN NUMERO UNO. HE DABBLED IN INSURANCE GUARANTEES ALONG WITH THE USUAL EXTORTION.

HYPOTHETICALLY: IF SOMEBODY HIJACKED A LOAD OF FILD MULTISMACK JUNKERS FROM YOU, YOU'D SEND ONE OF STERLING'S MEN ALONG WITH THE GUY DELIVERING THE RANSOM TO PROVE TO THE INSURANCE COMPANY THAT YOU WEREN'T RESPONSIBLE FOR LOSING THE MONEY. STERLING GUARANTEED EVERYTHING.

WHAT WAS IT THIS TIME? BLACKJACK AGAIN?

BLACKJACK? BLACKJACK? JESUS CHRIST, WHAT DO YOU TAKE ME FOR? I'M THROUGH WITH BLACKJACK. THEY'D BE HAPPY AT THE MPI: AT LEAST THEY CURED ME OF SOMETHING. I EVEN GAVE UP POKER, SLOTS, AND ROULETTE. NEVER AGAIN. I BET ON THE GREYHOUNDS.

FLEX, LISTEN, IF THIS IS ANOTHER ONE OF YOUR DIRTY TRICKS- IF YOU DON'T GET THAT MONEY I'M DEAD, AND I DON'T MEAN METAPHORICALLY.

IT'LL BE FINE. BELIEVE ME.

THE WAY I PICTURE IT IS LIKE THIS: SEND SOME YOUNG THINGS TO THE COSMODROME TO THROW FLOWERS AT ME AND SHOUT THAT THEY'LL WAIT FOR ME. AND MAKE SURE THEY'RE PURE, INNOCENT GIRLS, NOT SOME DISGUSTING, DIRTY OLD WHORES.

THAT MEANS YES?

YEAH.

HEY THERE, VENT. I GOT A LITTLE CARROT FOR YOU.

HAVE A LOOK.

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

KILL PUOOX

FAZZURA

GOPAX WOOD III

THAT MEANS YES?

YEAH.

WE LEFT MADISON B EARLY THE NEXT MORNING. THE AIR TASTED OF ROTTING RUBBER, AND THE HORIZON WAS AS RED AS LENIN'S LIPSTICK.

AND FOR THE FIRST TIME IN AGES I WAS FEELING PRETTY GOOD.

GOD, THIS ISN'T EVEN A SPACE MODULE. LOOK AT THE CHASSIS: IT'S A CONVERTED AGRICULTURAL HOVERCRAFT, SOME KIND OF WEEDER OR HARVESTER.

TAKE YOUR COMPLAINTS DIRECTLY TO THE CAPTAIN. GOOD MORNING, NIKKI. SLEEP WELL?

PISS OFF, ASSHOLE.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

DID YOU REALLY THINK I WOULDN'T FIND OUT? YOU KILLED EIGHT PEOPLE DURING THAT STRIKE.

I DON'T REMEMBER AT ALL. I SUFFER FROM A FLEXIBLE CHARACTER, AS WELL AS POSEY'S SYNDROME.

BUT NOW I'M COMPLETELY ALRIGHT. I LISTEN TO MOTIVATIONAL CASSETTES EVERY EVENING, REALLY.

THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT! YOU MADE ME LOOK LIKE AN IDIOT YESTERDAY. WHY DON'T YOU JUST GO TO HELL AND STAY THERE.

WOMEN. ONCE THEY FIND OUT YOU'RE A MENTALLY DISTURBED MASS MURDERER THEY WON'T GIVE YOU THE TIME OF DAY.

NOW I WASN'T FEELING SO GOOD.

FOOOM

FOR FUCKS...

THIS CAN'T...

Asia Carrera

LIKE HER REAPING MODULE, NIKKI VICKER'S TRUCK DIDN'T LOOK TOO HOT, BUT IT WAS LOADED. THE NEWEST MAGNETOPLASMA MOTORS: VASIMIR SIXTH GENERATION. UPON LEAVING THE JETS, THE PLASMA RECOMBINED WITH AN INJECTION OF COOLED HELIUM.

THANKS TO THE NEWLY BUILT TUNNEL THROUGH THE ASTEROID ZONE, WE NO LONGER HAD TO CRAWL THROUGH THE ECLIPTIC LEVEL, SO THE TRIP TO JUPITER TOOK ONLY FIVE DAYS.

EIGHT PEOPLE TO ONE TRUCK IS TOO MANY. THERE WAS VICKERS AND BROULARD AND STERLING'S MAN, MCPHERSON, IN ADDITION TO THE OLD HANDS: KAWALSKI, VENT, LEROY AND ME. GLIPPEN, THE SECOND PILOT, HARDLY EVER LEFT THE CABIN, BUT IT WAS STILL PRETTY CROWDED.

THAT AFTER YOUR LONG AND BRILLIANT CAREER YOU'RE BACK ON A TRUCK. AND I'M IN CHARGE OF THE WHOLE OPERATION WHILE YOU'RE JUST DICKING AROUND.
TEN LITTLE INDIANS

THE RANSOM MONEY HAS BEEN PUT INTO BRIEFCASES WITH OPTICAL LOCKS. IF ANYBODY OTHER THAN DELGADO LOOKS INTO THE DETECTOR IT'LL BLOW UP RIGHT IN HIS FACE.

I'M JUST MENTIONING IT. IN CASE YOU HAD ANY FLEXIBLE IDEAS.

AND I CAN SEE YOU'RE FULL OF IDEAS.

TAMARA'S IDEA OF GENTLE FLIRTATION WAS MORE LIKE GROOMING A POODLE WITH A HIGH-SPEED ROUTER.

I BET I'D REALLY LIKE SOME OF YOUR IDEAS.

HOW MUCH?

THANK GOD.

I GOTTA GO.

IDIOT.

YEAH, I GUESS I AM AN IDIOT.

DAMN! WHY DOES URANUS ALWAYS HAVE TO RUN OUT FIRST?

URANUS 7 FLAVOURS 10
gummo 1
3 SHIT 9
BOMB 2 1
Fm's
CLUNK CLUNK

YOU KNOW, THIS REALLY IS A GOOD CANDY BAR.

SEVEN FLAVORS. I THINK THERE'S EVEN ALMONDS IN IT.

YOUR BEHAVIOR MAKES ME WANT TO PUKE.

I'M GONNA PUKE ALL OVER YOUR SCUMMY OVERALLS, YOUR BOOTS, YOUR FACE, AND THAT STUPID CANDY BAR. WITH ALMONDS.

THEN IT'D HAVE EIGHT FLAVORS.

AH.

SEX IN SPACE HAS BEEN POPULAR SINCE THE NIGHT OF APRIL 12, 1961, WHEN YURI GAGARIN'S SPERM SHOT MAJESTICALLY INTO THE WEIGHTLESSNESS OF THE VOSTOK I CABIN - ALTHOUGH IT WAS TERESKOVA WHO HELD THE ORGIES.

IT IS OF COURSE TRUE THAT SINCE ARTIFICIAL ANTI-GRAVITATION CAME INTO USE, SPACE SEX HAS LOST ITS SPECIAL CHARM. BUT BROULARD AND KAWALSKI DIDN'T SEEM TO MIND.

AHHHH. MMMMMMM.

UMM...

WHAT?

NOTHING.

YOU WEREN'T TRYING TO SUGGEST SOMETHING?

NO, I WASN'T. YOU CAN'T HOOK ME THAT EASILY.

ZZZZZZIP

I'M ALWAYS SURPRISED BY HOW SOFT THEY ARE.

GLYCERIN

YOU KNOW, FLEX, I DON'T NORMALLY DO THIS DURING A FLIGHT.

YEAH.

YOU'RE A REAL PRO.

I REALLY DON'T NORMALLY DO THIS.

YOU ALREADY SAID THAT.

YEAH. IT'S ALSO BECAUSE YOU... I MEAN... FORGET IT.

PLAY
Self - Knowledge
Self - Control
RELAX. THINK ABOUT THE SEA LAPPING THE SHORE. THINK ABOUT A CHERRY ORCHARD IN BLOOM. DIVE DEEPLY INTO YOUR INNER SELF. YOU MUSTN'T LET YOURSELF BE MANIPULATED BY THOSE AROUND YOU. DON'T TRY TO INGRATIATE YOURSELF WITH THEM. BE YOURSELF.
mmmm.
mmmm.

FUCK!

MMMM... AGAIN?

I HEARD SOMETHING.

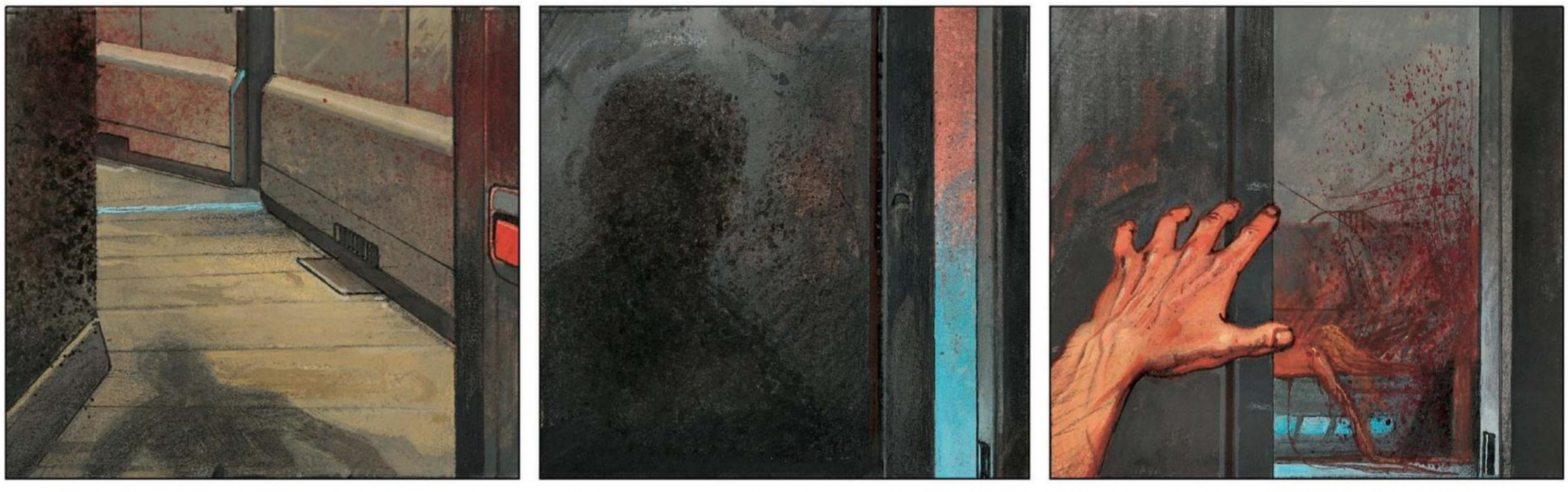
JUST A BAD DREAM. GO TO SLEEP.

NO, REALLY, I HEARD SOMETHING.

WHERE? JEEZ, FORGET ABOUT IT...

I HEARD SOMETHING.

I DEFINITELY HEARD SOMETHING.


I THOUGHT I WAS READY FOR ALL CONTINGENCIES.
I'D GONE OVER AND OVER THE POSSIBILITIES: LEROY COULD SCREW ME OVER SOMEHOW. TAMARA COULD TRY TO SHAFT EVERYBODY AND SELL THE JUNKERS TO MIDAS'S COMPETITION, MACPLUSH. VICKERS COULD SELL ME OUT TO DELGADO.
BUT I WASN'T PREPARED FOR KAWALSKI FALLING SO COMPLETELY OFF THE WAGON.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE CURED.
YEAH, SO DID I.
SHE SLEPT WITH ME. SHE WAS A DIRTY WHORE, A DISGUSTING SCAG. THE BITCH DESERVED IT.
HE'S GOT MAGGOTT'S SYNDROME. WE WERE TREATED AT THE MPI TOGETHER.
I'M GOING TO THE AIRLOCK TO GET IT OVER WITH.
DON'T FORGET THAT YOU OWE ME FIFTY CENTS FROM POKER. YOU CAN'T PAY ME IF YOU'RE DEAD.
I WAS TRYING SO HARD TO THINK OF SOMETHING MY BRAIN ALMOST BLEW A FUSE. I COULDN'T LOSE KAWALSKI. IF THE GOING GOT TOUGH, HE AND VENT WERE THE ONLY ONES I COULD COUNT ON. I WASN'T GOING TO LOSE MY LAST CHANCE BECAUSE OF SOME BULLSHIT. I MEAN, I WAS SORRY FOR TAMARA. BUT NOT MUCH.
AND THEN I GOT ONE OF THE BEST IDEAS IN MY DOUBLE-DEALING CAREER.
LET'S PIN IT ON LEROY.

LEROY

WHAT HAPPENED?

YOU KNOW VERY WELL WHAT HAPPENED, YOU DISGUSTING PERVERT.

SPILL IT.

WHAT?

WHY'D YOU KILL TAMARA?

WHAT?

I DIDN'T KILL ANYBODY!

THE TWO OF YOU WERE ALWAYS ARGUING. WORDS WERE EXCHANGED, LEROY GRABBED A KNIFE...

"YOU CAN DROP IT, LEROY. WE KNOW IT WAS YOU."

"POOR TAMARA MANAGED TO NAME THE KILLER BEFORE SHE DIED."

LEROY DID IT

LEROY DID...

ANYWAY, FLEX SAW YOU.

IT WAS A HORRIBLE SIGHT. LIKE HE'D JUST SUDDENLY GONE TOTALLY INSANE. HE KEPT STABBING HER AND STABBING HER... IT SHOOK ME TO THE CORE.

I SAW IT TOO! GUTS FLYING ALL OVER THE PLACE, BLOOD SPURTING. SURE, MAYBE THE BITCH DESERVED IT. DISGUSTING SCAG...

WHAT'S GOING ON? I DON'T GET IT. HOW CAN YOU BELIEVE THESE TWO BASTARDS!?!

HEY, LOOK WHAT I JUST FOUND!

WHAT... THAT AIN'T MINE! THAT AIN'T MINE! SOMEONE MUST'VE PUT IT THERE!

OH, RIGHT. WELL, I'D SAY THIS HERE'S AN OPEN AND SHUT CASE.

FLEX, YOU FUCK! YOU SET ME UP!

HOLD HIM! DON'T LET THEM AT EACH OTHER.

LOOK AT HIM: STILL THIRSTING FOR BLOOD.

I'LL KILL YOU, YOU BASTARD!

GET YOUR HANDS OFF ME.

OH, FUCK.

FLEX.

IT'S OKAY. I'M ALRIGHT. THANKS.

JESUS CHRIST, WHAT WAS THAT?

I'M SORRY. I FEEL REALLY BAD. I'M REALLY SORRY.

IT'S OKAY.

THAT WAS POSEY'S SYNDROME.

I'M REALLY, REALLY SORRY. IT'S... I DON'T KNOW HOW I...

REALLY, IT'S OKAY. IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT. ANYWAY, I BET YOU ALREADY FORGOT ALL ABOUT IT.

MAN, LEROY, YOU SHOULD BE GRATEFUL WE DIDN'T TURN FLEX LOOSE ON YOU. AFTER THAT, THE AIRLOCK WOULD SEEM LIKE A WALK IN THE PARK.

WHAT? YOU CAN'T!

WE CAN.

YOU BASTARDS, YOU FUCKING BASTARDS! YOU GOT NO RIGHT TO DO THIS!

THAT'S AN INTERESTING OBSERVATION, LEROY, BECAUSE AT THIS MOMENT YOU'RE UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE CAPTAIN OF THE SHIP, MS. VICKERS. AND A 'TRUCKERS' LYNCHING' IS COMPLETELY WITHIN HER POWERS.

SOMEONE JUST TOUCHES HIM – AND BLAM! THAT'S POSEY'S SYNDROME. THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED DURING THE STRIKE.

BUT NOW IT'S DELGADO WHO WANTS TO SMASH HIS HEAD IN.

FLEX'LL DEFINITELY HANDLE IT. HE'S CURED NOW. YOU KNOW, IF THEY RELEASE YOU FROM THE MPI YOU'RE CURED FOR GOOD.

OXYGEN RELEASE

ALRIGHT! ALRIGHT, I'LL TELL YOU!

THIS AIN'T REALLY ABOUT JUNKERS. THERE'S COCAINE IN THOSE GODDAMN TOYS. THE CARGO'S WORTH TEN TIMES WHAT THEY TOLD YOU, AND TAMARA DOESN'T KNOW A THING ABOUT IT.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I BOUGHT IT. IT MADE SENSE.

WHAT WOULD CHRISTMAS BE WITHOUT SNOW?

WELL, THAT'S JUST MORE EVIDENCE AGAINST YOU, LEROY.

NO! OH GOD!

THEN YOU COULDN'T HEAR HIM ANY MORE. PARTLY BECAUSE HE STARTED HOLDING HIS BREATH AND PARTLY BECAUSE SOUND WAVES DON'T TRAVEL THAT FAR IN SPACE.

HOLDING YOUR BREATH IS POINTLESS. YOU DON'T SUFFOCATE WHEN YOU'RE THROWN OUT INTO SPACE.

OR FREEZE. TRUE, THE TEMPERATURE IS ABSOLUTE ZERO: -273.15° CELSIUS. AND, YES, THAT DOES FREEZE YOUR CELLS INSTANTLY. BUT WHO CARES ABOUT THAT?

WITHIN TWO SECONDS ALL THE PRESSURIZED CAVITIES INSIDE YOUR BODY EXPLODE – YOUR SKULL, STOMACH, CHEST, ETC.

NOTHING CAN BE SEEN, OF COURSE, SINCE THEY'RE ALL INTERNAL INJURIES.

AND BY THE WAY, YOUR BLOOD BOILS.

WHAT FOLLOWS IS THIS: YOUR FROZEN CELLS START TO BREAK DOWN INTO MOLECULES, THEN INTO ATOMS. AND BECAUSE THIS IS THE SOLAR SYSTEM, YOUR ELECTRONS AND IONS ARE IMMEDIATELY BOMBARDED BY SOLAR WINDS TRAVELING AT 500 KM/S.

MILLIONS OF PARTICLES OF SOLAR WIND BLAST YOUR ATOMS TO SMITHEREENS, IN A WAY THAT MAKES CARPET-BOMBING HANOI LOOK LIKE PLAYING WITH CAPS. THIS BREAKS DOWN ATOMIC ORBITALS S, P, D AND F INTO A THICK ALPHABET SOUP FROM WHICH THERE IS NO RETURN. PURE DISINTEGRATION ON THE SUBATOMIC LEVEL.

ALL IN ALL, IT WAS A FAIRLY INTERESTING TRUCKERS' INTERLUDE.

AND SINCE IT WAS LEROY, WE PARTICULARLY ENJOYED IT.

DELGADO HERE. IT'S A FORMER DOCK, THE EIGHTH GRAVITATIONAL HANGAR. SEND TAMARA OR LEROY, OR WHICHEVER CLOWN'S IN CHARGE. AND DON'T FORGET FLEX.

THINK ABOUT THE SEA LAPPING THE SHORE. DON'T TRY TO BEHAVE IN SUCH A WAY AS TO INGRATIATE YOURSELF WITH THOSE AROUND YOU. BE YOURSELF. RELAX INSIDE. THINK ABOUT A CHERRY ORCHARD IN BLOOM.

THE WHOLE TIME I THOUGHT THAT I'D BE TOTALLY WOUND UP. BUT I NOTICED I DIDN'T REGISTER ANY NERVOUSNESS. ABSOLUTELY NOTHING.

THE ONLY THING I FELT IS GLYCERIN.

I'D HANDLE IT. I'D HANDLE IT BECAUSE THERE IS NO OTHER OPTION. THIS IS MY LAST CHANCE.

SOMETHING WRONG, KAWALSKI? SOMETHING UP WITH FLEX?

WHAT? NOTHING'S UP WITH FLEX. FLEX IS FINE, JUST FINE. COURSE, HE'S NERVOUS. I GUESS HE'S AFRAID HE'LL GO NUTS FOR GOOD AND BE DRAGGED AWAY SCREAMING, NEVER TO BE SEEN AGAIN. WHO WOULDN'T BE NERVOUS?

IT'S JUST... I DON'T KNOW. IT'S JUST THAT EVERYTHING'S GOING TO SHIT. TAMARA'S DEAD, LEROY TOO, AND WE'RE HERE ALONE WITH FLEX. IT SHOULDN'T BE LIKE THIS. IT SHOULDN'T BE LIKE THIS AT ALL.

JUST IN CASE.

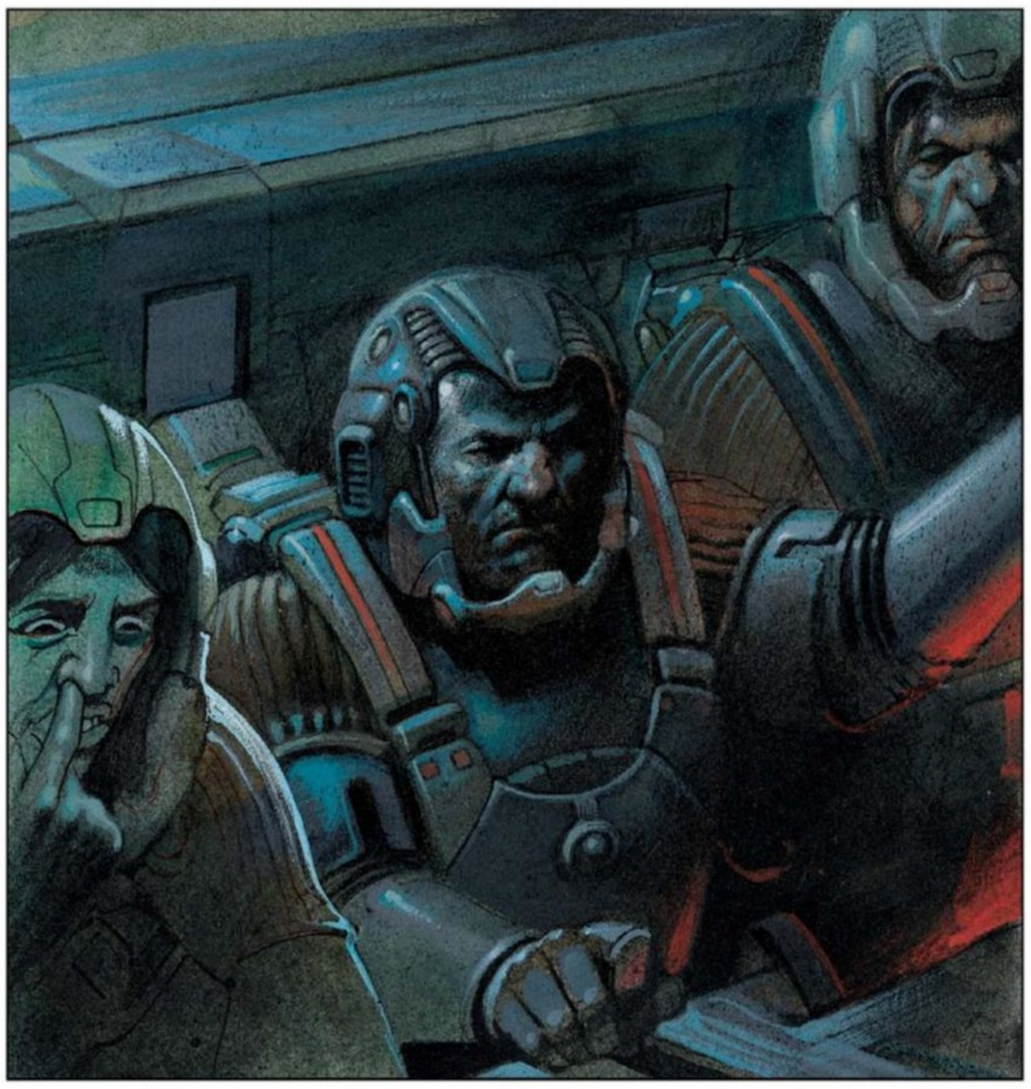
NO, I BETTER NOT. THANKS.

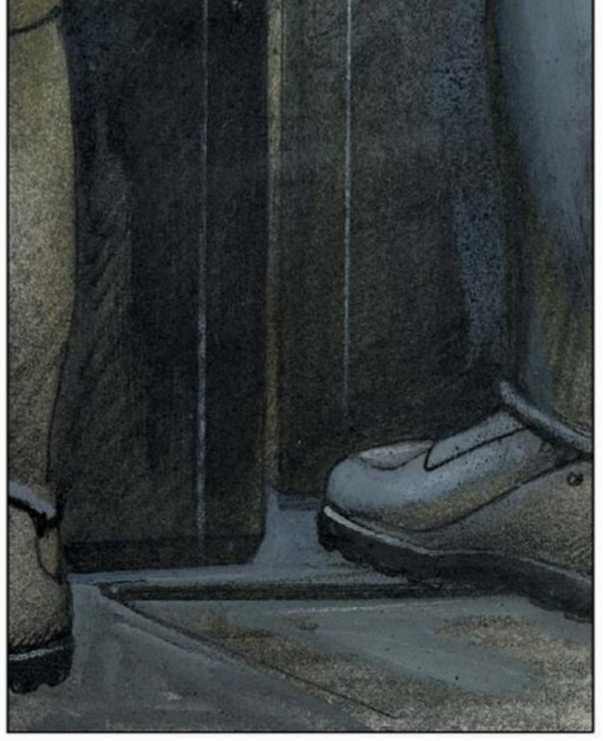
GODDAMMIT, VENT, HAS THE DOUGH YOU'RE GETTING COMPLETELY LIQUIDATED YOUR BRAINS? NOT THAT IT'D SURPRISE ME MUCH: IT'LL BE THE BIGGEST PILE OF CASH YOU'VE SEEN IN YOUR WHOLE MISERABLE LIFE, EH? WHAT'RE YOU GONNA DO WITH IT? PARTY? BUY YOURSELF A HARLEY? MÖTLEY CRÜE TICKETS?

CRINOLINES.

I GOT A GRANT FROM THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE TO DO A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE INFLUENCE OF BONED CRINOLINE ON SOCIAL CONTACTS AMONG THE UPPER FRENCH ARISTOCRACY IN THE SECOND QUARTER OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. BUT THE GRANT ISN'T BIG ENOUGH. I'LL USE THE DOUGH TO MAKE UP THE DIFFERENCE.

BREAK A LEG.
NO PROBLEM. ACTUALLY, I'D RATHER NOT.





GLAD TO SEE YOU, FLEX. LET'S TAKE CARE OF THE MONEY FIRST.

OPTICAL LOCK CONFIGURED TO YOUR IRIS.

AMAZING. I'M IMPRESSED. BUT I WARN YOU, MY PARTNER HERE HAS HIS FINGER ON A TNT DETONATOR, SO I HOPE DA SILVA HASN'T HAD ANY BRIGHT IDEAS.

WE HOPED THAT EVEN MORE.

VZZT

SEND THE ORBITAL COORDINATES TO THE DECK COMPUTER DIRECTING WHERE WE LEFT THE JUNKERS.

DONE.

AND NOW THE FUN PART. PUT DOWN THE BRIEFCASE, FLEX.

I SAID YOU WOULDN'T MAKE IT HERE AT ALL. AND, FLEX, I BELIEVED THAT TILL THE VERY LAST MOMENT. I HAD NO IDEA YOU WERE SUCH A DESPERATE LOSER.

WELL?

TRY ANYTHING YOU LIKE, WALT. I'M CURED NOW. I'M COMPLETELY FINE.

YOU JUST DON'T GET IT: ASSHOLES NEVER WIN. BUT YOU JUST DON'T KNOW WHEN YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH.

YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME, WALT. I'M ALRIGHT NOW.

"THE SECRET TO SUCCESS, WHETHER IT'S WOMEN OR MONEY, IS KNOWING WHEN TO QUIT. I OUGHTA KNOW: I'M DIVORCED AND BROKE."

WALTER DELGADO ALWAYS USED A SHOT-GUN.

SONNY CROCKETT, "MIAMI VICE".

THAT WAS JUST HIS STYLE.

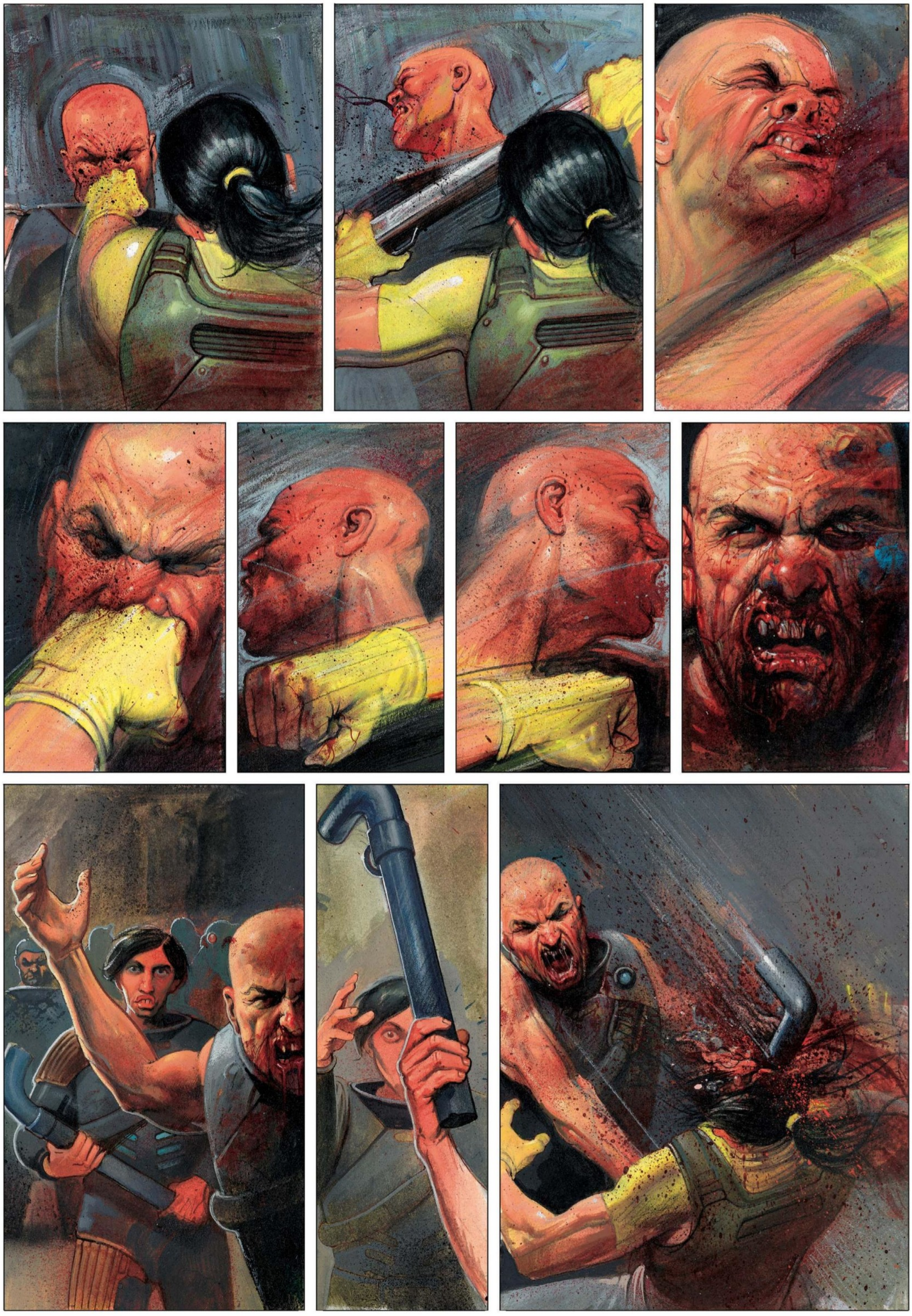
STILL NOTHING?

STILL NOTHING.

GET UP, ASSHOLE.

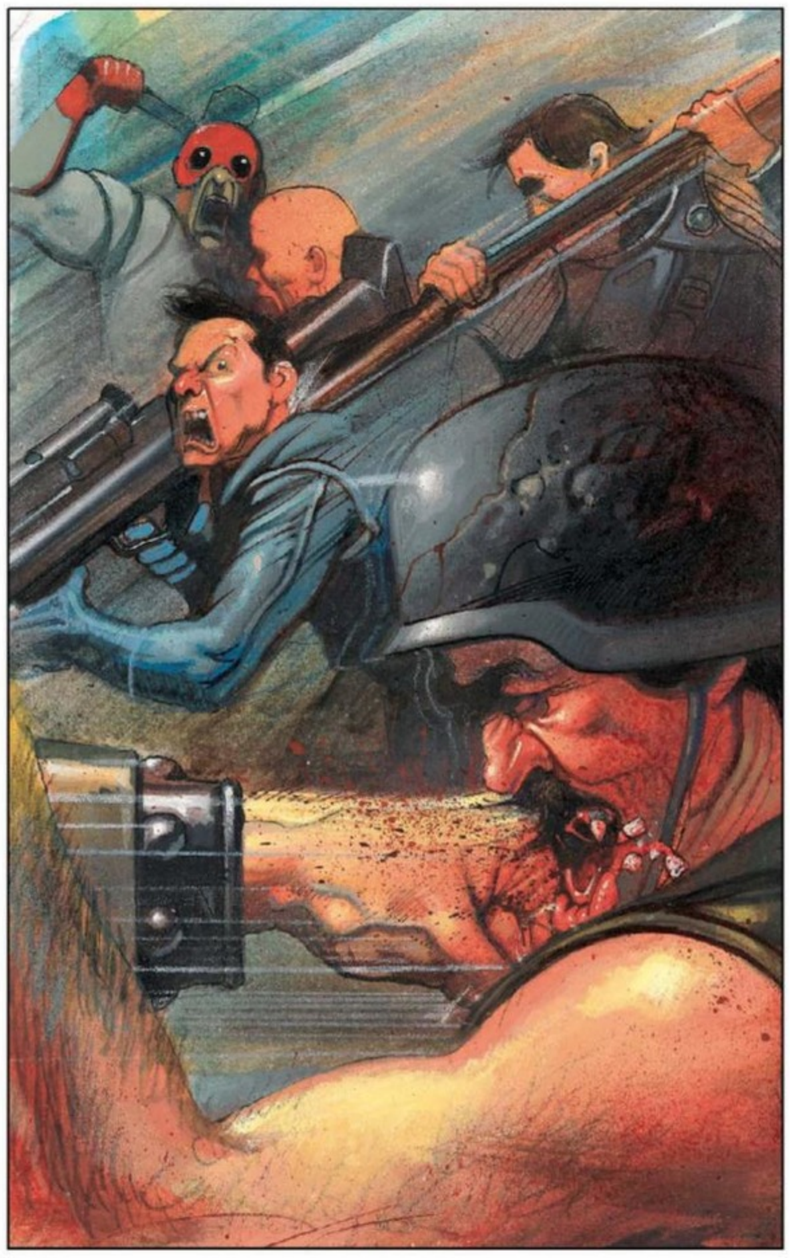
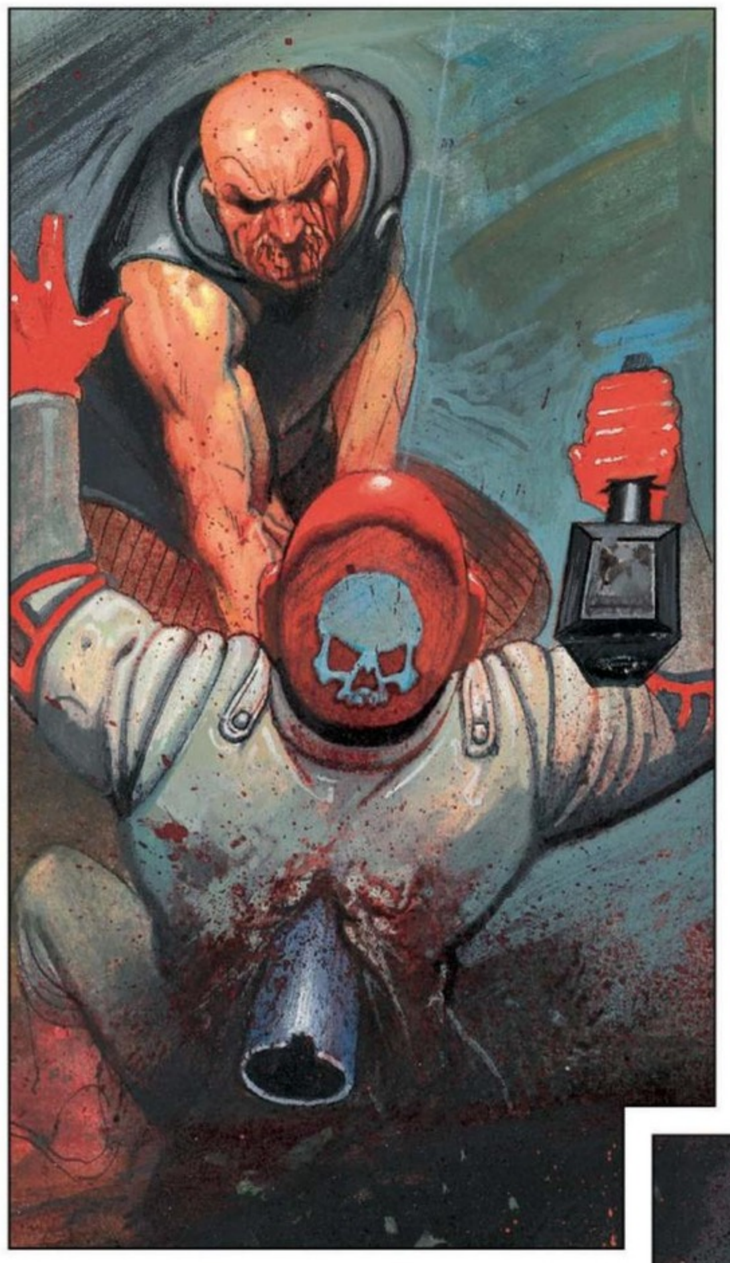
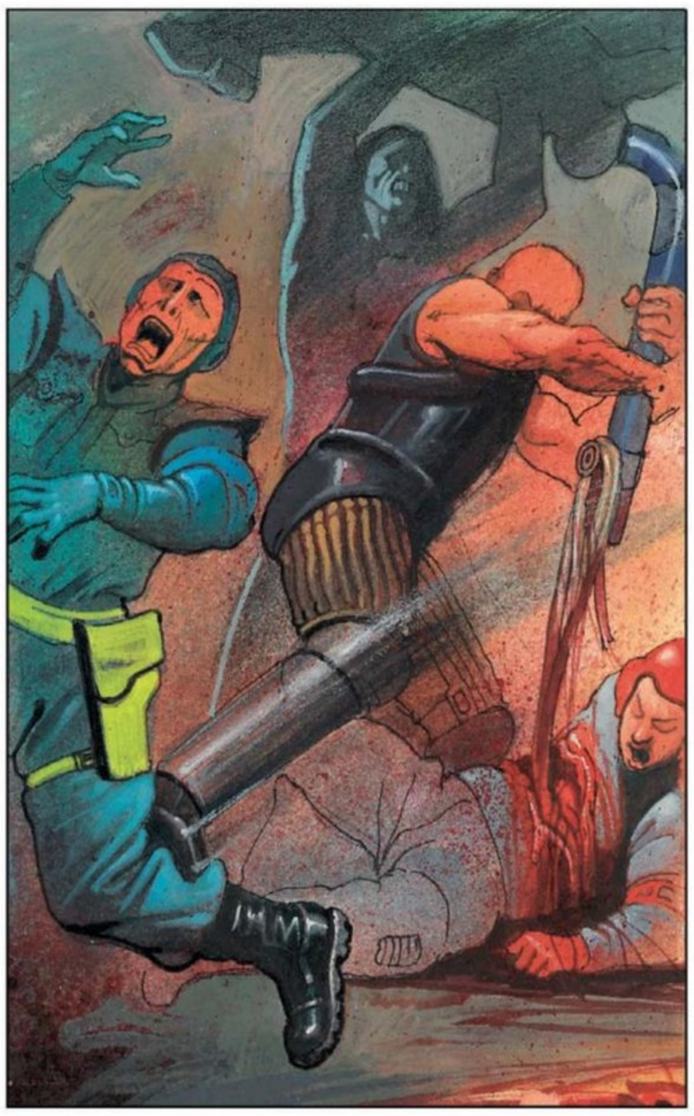
BLUUUUGGH

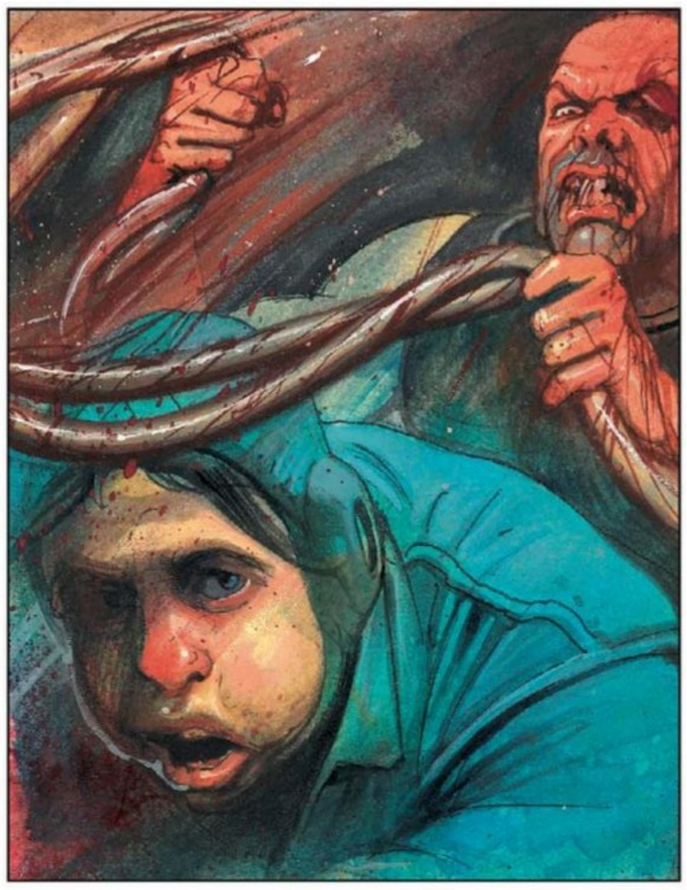
ON YOUR FEET.

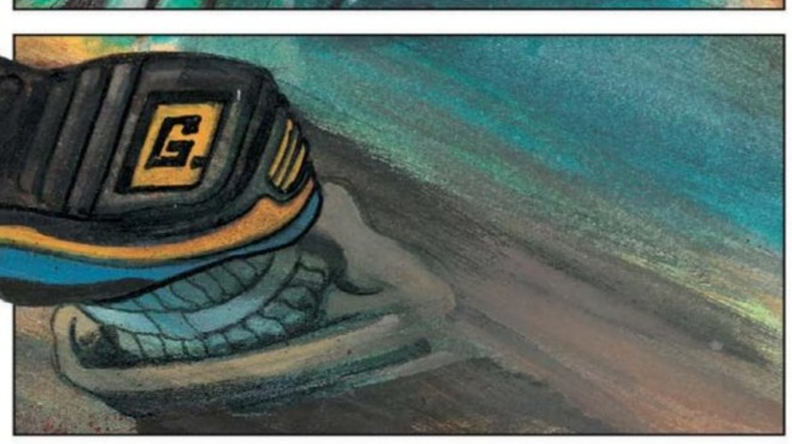
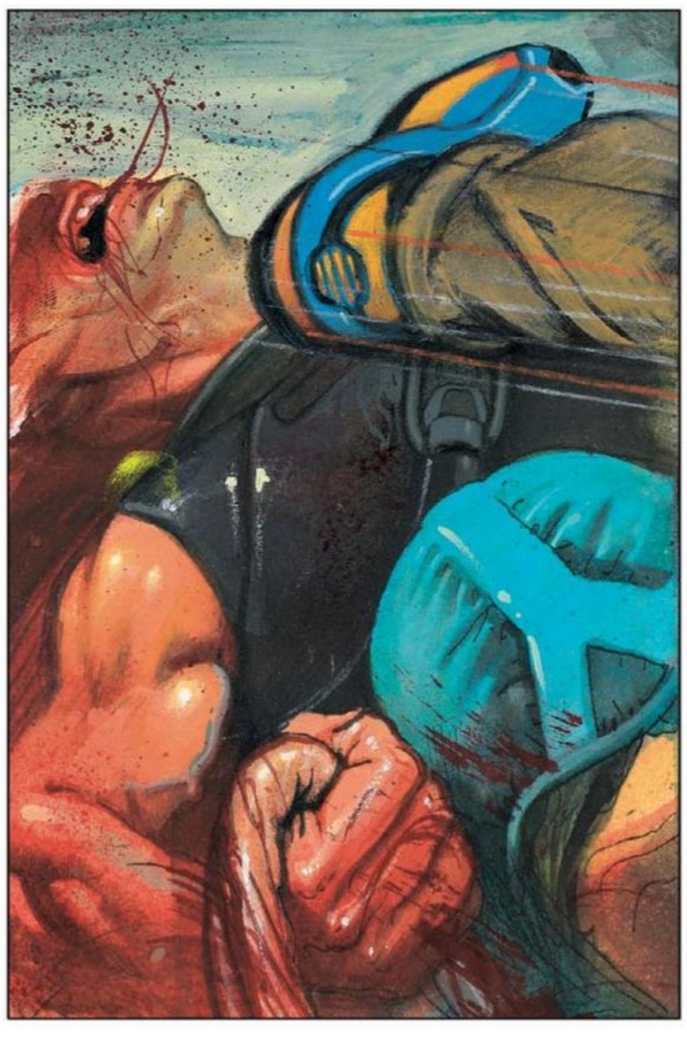
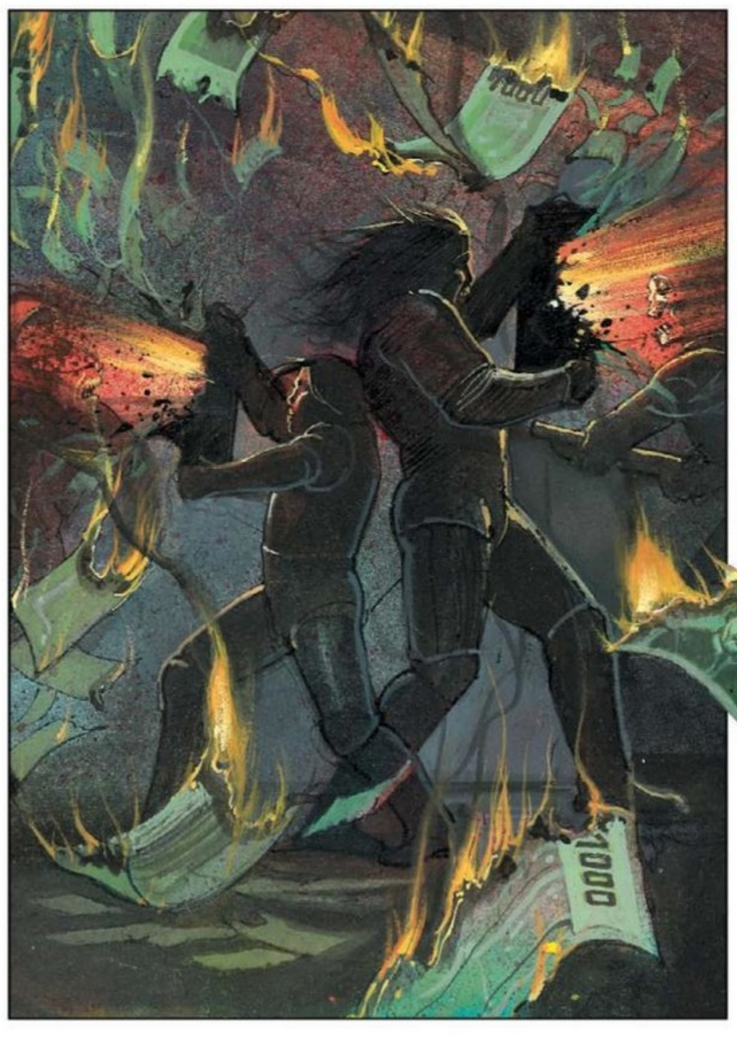


WHAM!
GLYK

TNT



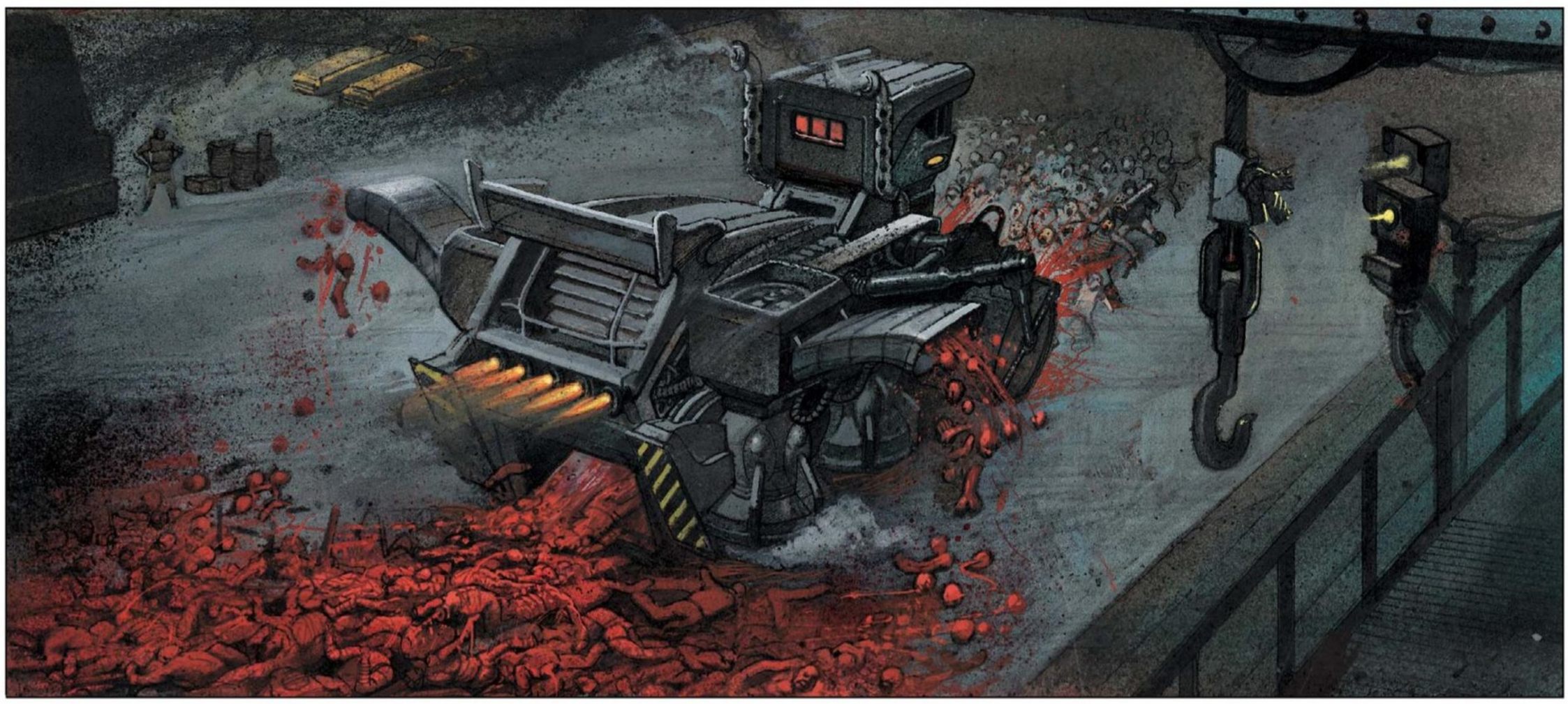
NOW.

FLEX, YOU MOTHERFUCKER!

COME BACK, YOU DOUBLE-CROSSING BASTARD!

CLICK.

WROOOM



SWOOSH

"Our external sensors report that the harvest is in. Number of sacks of wheat: eighteen. Congratulations to our harvesters."

KACHUCK

I'D REALLY LIKE TO KNOW HOW THEY MADE THAT BONE CRINOLINE. OBVIOUSLY FROM BONES, BUT WHAT KIND OF BONES? WHALE BONES? THOSE FASHION DESIGNERS MUST'VE NEEDED A SHITLOAD OF WHALE BONES, AND I BET THOSE WHALERS USED GATLING GUN HARPOONS.

HOW'D GREENPEACE HAVE GONE AFTER THEM, EVEN IF GREENPEACE HAD EXISTED IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY? OH, MAN, IT'D DEFINITELY BE GOOD TO KNOW, BUT WE'RE NEVER GONNA FIND OUT NOW: VENT IS DEAD AND ALL BECAUSE YOU FUCKED UP!

YOU REALLY DID IT AGAIN. GOOD REFLEXES. YOU'VE DONE US OUT OF OUR CUT, AND DONE DA SILVA OUT OF THE RANSOM MONEY AND THE INSURANCE: ABOUT HALF A BILLION IN ALL. THAT'S NOT GONNA BOTHER HIM IN THE LEAST. DELGADO WAS RIGHT; WE SHOULDN'T HAVE COME OUT FROM UNDER OUR ROCKS. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO PAY STERLING WITH, ON THE WAY HOME MCPHERSON WILL PROBABLY BUMP ME OFF IN THE NAME OF THE COMPANY, AND YOU'RE GOING TO THE NUTHOUSE FOR GOOD - NOT THAT YOU DON'T BELONG THERE. THAT'S IT, THE END. FINAL CREDITS: NO ANIMALS WERE INJURED DURING THE MAKING OF THIS FILM.

HOLD ON, FLEX, WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS IT? I HOPE YOU AREN'T GETTING ANY BRIGHT IDEAS. YOU AREN'T, ARE YOU?

SAY YOU AREN'T. YOU AREN'T PLANNING ANYTHING FLEXIBLE, ARE YOU, FLEX? SOME DIRTY TRICK? YOU AREN'T, ARE YOU?

WELCOME BACK, HERO.

WIPE YOUR FACE OFF; YOU LOOK LIKE AN OX THAT ESCAPED FROM A SLAUGHTERHOUSE. THAT PRETTY MUCH FITS. WHERE'S KAWALSKI?

IN THE MODULE. I TOLD HIM NOT TO GO ANYWHERE.

WE ALL SAW IT ON MCPHERSON'S MONITOR. AMAZING. PERFECT. HACKENBRUDER, THE PSYCHO IN ALL HIS GLORY, JUST LIKE WE'D HEARD ABOUT.

RIGHT: "I HAVE EVERYTHING UNDER CONTROL..." JEEZ.

WELL, I BET DA SILVA'S NOT GOING TO BE TOO HAPPY ABOUT THIS. I BET THIS HAS JUST ABOUT FINISHED YOU.

BLAM

SOME JOB, HACKENBRUDER! I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT MEANT, BUT REST ASSURED, I SENT HEADQUARTERS AND MR. DA SILVA A RECOMMENDATION FOR THE INSURANCE COMPANY NOT TO PAY OFF. AND NOW I'M GOING TO TELL CAPTAIN VICKERS TO LOCK YOU UP IN ISOLATION BECAUSE YOUR MENTAL STATE...

BLAM

SAY BYE-BYE.

BLAM BLAM

I SUPPOSE YOU WANT THE COMPUTER MAP COORDINATES FOR THE JUNKERS?

YEAH.

AND NOTHING ELSE OCCURRED TO YOU? HOW ABOUT THE TWO OF US STEALING THE COCAINE FROM DA SILVA TOGETHER?

YOU WOULDN'T DO IT.

NO, YOU'RE RIGHT, I WOULDN'T. I LIKE MY JOB AND I'M NOT FLUSHING IT DOWN THE TOILET OVER SOME GODDAMN COKE. ON TOP OF THAT, I'D BE CHEATING SOMEBODY WHO HIRED ME. THAT WOULDN'T BE VERY PROFESSIONAL.

SO I WON'T GIVE YOU THE COORDINATES. AND I DON'T THINK THE RISK IS THAT GREAT.

I KNOW YOU'RE NOT THE ABSOLUTE BASTARD THEY ALL SAY YOU ARE, AND THAT EVEN YOU THINK YOU ARE. AND IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT YOU'VE DONE IN THE PAST, BECAUSE I KNOW THAT I...

OKAY, WHAT I'M GOING TO SAY NOW WILL SOUND TOTALLY BANAL AND SILLY, BUT MONEY REALLY ISN'T EVERYTHING.

IF YOU THINK I WOULDN'T SHOOT YOU, YOU'RE WRONG.

LAUGH IF YOU LIKE, BUT LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP REALLY... FORGET ABOUT MONEY.

OBVIOUSLY, IF YOU RETURN, DA SILVA WILL HAVE YOU PUT AWAY IN THE MPI FOR LIFE. BUT IF YOU TAKE HIM THE COCAINE HE WILL HAVE YOU PUT AWAY JUST FOR A COUPLE YEARS. AND, FLEX, YOU DO NEED TREATMENT, YOU KNOW THAT YOURSELF.

IF YOU THINK I WOULDN'T SHOOT YOU, YOU'RE WRONG.

MAN, CAN'T YOU TRUST ME A LITTLE?

BLAM

BLAM

FLE...

THIS IS HACKENBRUDER, SIR.

HACKENBRUDER! FROM THE REPORTS I'VE RECEIVED, I'D CALCULATE THAT YOU OWE ME AROUND HALF A BILLION.

AND I'D CALCULATE THAT YOU CAN KISS MY ASS.

THE THING IS, YOU OLD FART, I'M KEEPING THE STUFF.

IMPOSSIBLE...

ABSOLUTELY POSSIBLE. AND DON'T GET TOO FIDGETY OR I'LL RAT YOU OUT. SMUGGLING COKE IS STILL A CRIME.

YOU'RE A DEAD MAN, A GONER, YOU UNDERSTAND! YOU'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO SELL THE COCAINE, I'VE ALREADY SPOKEN TO ALL THE FAMILIES ON JUPITER. NOBODY'S GOING TO BUY IT OFF YOU, FUCKER, NOBODY!

I GUESS THAT MEANS I'M PRETTY SCREWED, HUH?

GILMORE H BASE, JUPITER. FORTY-SEVEN MINUTES LATER.

McPLUSH

PRESIDENT MCPLUSH WAS ECSTATIC. SHE REMINDED ME A BIT OF TAMARA. MAINLY HOW SHE MADE IT CLEAR THAT SHE WOULDN'T MIND IF I ASKED HER OUT. ME OR MY NEARBY FRIEND. OR BOTH OF US. I ALMOST SAID WE'RE THE KIND OF GUYS WHO KILL THEIR DATES. I TOOK THE MONEY AND LEFT.

YOUR SHARE: EXACTLY 125 MILLION, IN BIG NOTES.

SHOULD I THANK YOU?

FOR WHAT?

THAT I'M THE ONLY ONE YOU DIDN'T KILL.

I'D NEVER DO THAT TO A FRIEND.

HMM. RIGHT. OTHERWISE WHO'D'VE HACKED INTO THE COMPUTER TO GET THE COORDINATES, EH? SHIT, FLEX...

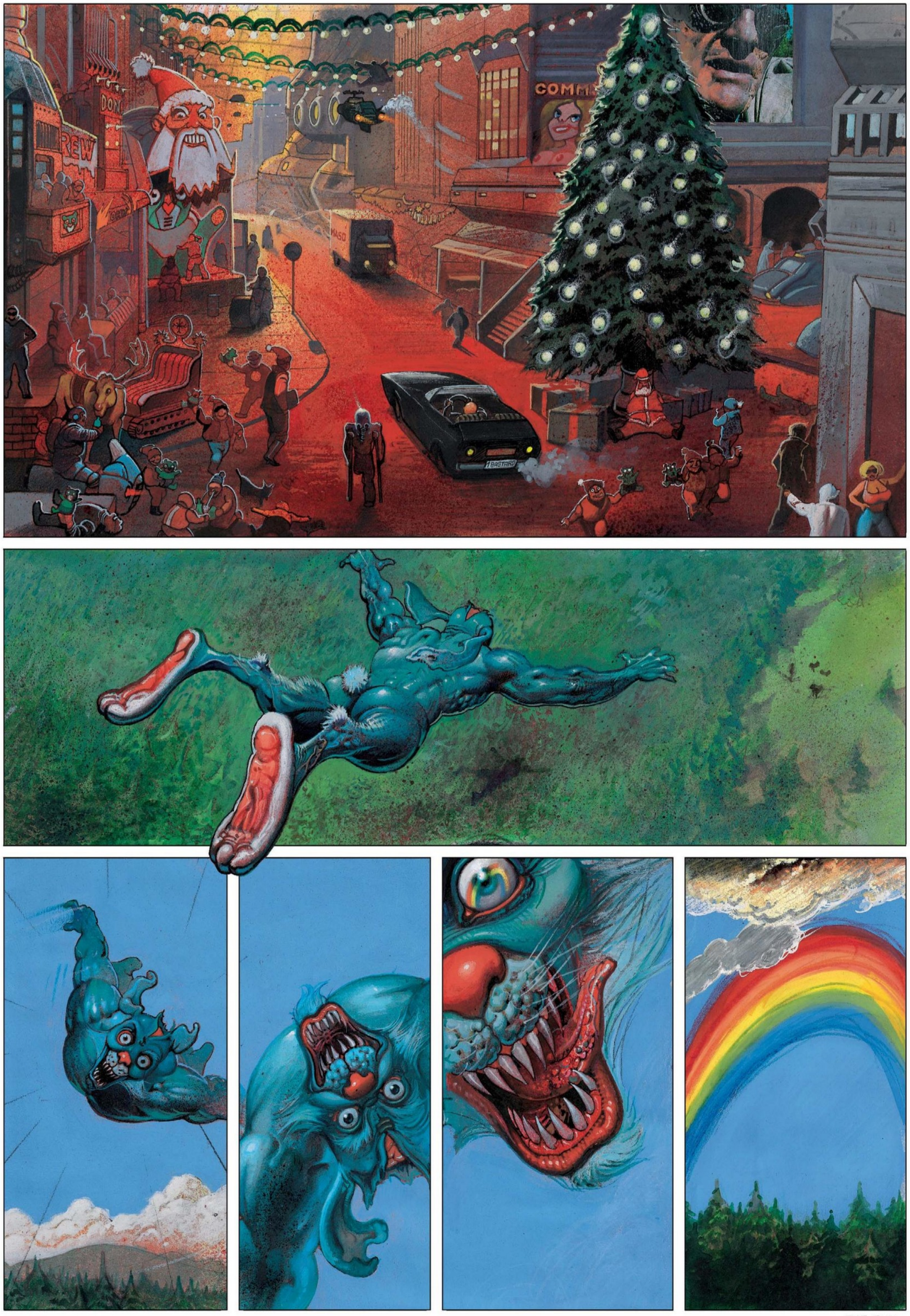
YOU REALLY ARE THE BASTARD THEY SAY YOU ARE.

KAWALSKI.

YEAH?

YOU OWE ME FIFTY CENTS.

I'M THINKING ABOUT THE SEA LAPPING THE SHORE. I'M THINKING ABOUT A CHERRY ORCHARD IN BLOOM.



- THE END -

9 789617 081893